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General debate on national experience in population matters: new trends in migration — demographic aspects

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.9/2013/1.

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Statement

The International Federation of University Women welcomes the opportunity to comment on the theme for the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Population and Development, "New trends in migration: demographic aspects".

As pointed out in the position paper on population dynamics in the context of the post-2015 development agenda by the organization Beyond 2015, women migrants, particularly those who are refugees or undocumented, may be adversely affected by migration and need to be protected. The same also applies to adolescents and children, who may migrate alone or without family support.

It is important to ensure that migrant-responsive policies include full information and proper documentation. Migration should also take place in safe and legal conditions, while respecting human rights. Furthermore, measures should be taken to address the specific needs of women migrants, as well as adolescents, especially girls, and to protect children from the abuse and exploitation commonly associated with trafficking. Women must have access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health information and services, and children and adolescents should have full access to education at all levels, including comprehensive sexuality education in destination countries.

It should be taken into consideration that young mothers and older women migrants face particular problems of isolation insofar as they may not know the language of their destination country and may also be illiterate. While programmes are often in place for migrants who assimilate into the workplace, they fail to provide such women the skills they require for living in their new countries. The International Federation of University Women urges that this need be addressed and would point to the project entitled "let's read together" of the Finnish Federation of University Women, which regularly brings together its own members with migrant women, often on a one-to-one basis, to provide, for example, help with language, counselling and assistance for the migrant women. As part of the project, migrant women might be given help in completing official forms or be accompanied in visits to the doctor or to the social security office. The availability of such programmes can help to address the problems of isolation that these women otherwise experience.
